April Fool’s Day brings out in each of us our inner mischief for a day. For most, that extends to tied-together shoelaces or a water fountain turned geyser (provided we’re feeling adventurous). Most of us settle for mediocrity, even on this day. But some go above and beyond.

Down the years, there have been numerous hoaxes and pranks perpetrated on such a large scale that they caused nationwide trouble and their legacies lasted decades. These masters of the craft deserve to be celebrated for their ingenuity and on this day above all.

On October 30, 1938, Orson Welles’ War of the Worlds, popularly adapted to film numerous times since its initial publishing, was first broadcast on radio. Although it was acknowledged as a work of fiction at the beginning of the broadcast, the material was presented as if it was actually happening. Thousands of people tuned in late to hear horrifying “news broadcasts” of alien invasion. There was mass panic throughout the nation, with people stockpiling supplies for the end that was apparently coming and huddling in their homes. It took hours to fully quell the panic. In people’s defense, the broadcast was very convincing, complete with radio newscasters, supposed on-site coverage, and interviews with fake scientists.

This is not the only alien-related prank. One of the more notorious hoaxes in modern history is also tied to this alien paranoia. Over a period of years, a number of strange circular patterns appeared in crop fields the world over. They were obviously not made by natural coincidences, and no easy explanation presented itself for how a human could make such a sprawling diagram without breaking any of the cornstalks. When how the hoax was done finally came to light, it was so painfully simple that it seemed obvious. The crop circles were made using an ingenious rig of ropes and wooden boards that were manipulated in such a way that they flattened out the corn without breaking it. So successful was this hoax that the methods used were not understood until after those responsible confessed. So ingenious were the methods that they befuddled everyone for years.

Yet another famous hoax was perpetrated by two little girls. They decided one day to cut out fairies from a book of fairy-tales and pin them up like they were real, and take pictures of them. While the photos wouldn’t seem convincing by today’s standards, they were taken at face value back then. Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the Sherlock Holmes books, even went so far as to advocate their existence publicly, so firmly did he believe in them.

And last but certainly not least, there is the incident of the spaghetti trees. On April Fool’s Day 1957, the BBC released a brief news report about farms of Italy, specifically those that supposedly grew spaghetti trees. Women were shown harvesting spaghetti from trees on television, and the program gave tips on how to grow spaghetti most effectively. People in Britain took it seriously, and the BBC received hundreds of phone calls the next day, some from people wishing to know how they could get their own spaghetti tree. The BBC reputedly replied, “Throw a piece of spaghetti into a tin of tomato sauce and hope.” People never expected such a ridiculous hoax from such a trusted source, and that made it all the better.

Every one of these hoaxes is ingenious to the extreme, and every one should be remembered on April Fool’s Day, that day of pranks and hoaxes. Throughout history, humans have perpetrated hoaxes, from fairies to crop circles. So enjoy these tales, and remember these geniuses.